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THE MELODY

OF THE

TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.



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THE MELODY

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TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

I.

'The Ford is my Shepherd.'



HERE is in the covenant of grace, says Matthew Henry, a salve for every sore; and so there is

a word in the Bible for every trouble and every need. Not one could be spared. For instance, not one of all the names by which the Lord has made Himself known to us. For our need has many a different

Guide, a Light for perplexity; all loneliness and forlornness that I lone liness and for lone lines lines lines lines and lines lin

Give ear, O Shenhard of T

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even from the furthest corner of that great field, the world, we may still say:

'I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments.'

—Ps. cxix. 176.

But if other hands than our own have made the way desolate, then we crave shelter and loving care. And the promise is sure:

'He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.'—Isa. xl. 11.

They that dwell in the full sunshine of earthly love and joy cannot know the fragrant healing of this balm of Gilead; nor imagine the exquisite tenderness with which in some cold region of lonely sorrow these words rest on the heart: The Lord is my Shepherd.

'For thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day

THE TWENT

even from the furth

'I have gone astray servant; for I do not -Ps. cxix. 176.

But if other ha made the way d shelter and loving is sure:

'He shall feed E shall gather the lar them in His boson that are with young

They that dw earthly love and grant healing o imagine the exc in some cold r

The cloudy and dark daspecial time. Do you dou think the Lord forgets the most need of His care?

'How think ye? If a man sheep, and one of them be gonnot leave the ninety and nine, ar mountains, and seeketh that which And if so be that he find it, verily he rejoiceth more of that sheep, thand nine which went not astray not the will of your Father which that one of these little ones should be a seeketh that one of these little ones should be a seeketh that one of these little ones should be a seeketh that one of these little ones should be a seeketh that one of these little ones should be a seeketh that one of these little ones should be a seeketh that one of these little ones should be a seeketh that one of these little ones should be a seeketh that the seeketh that which the seeketh that which are seeketh that the seeketh that which are seeketh that the seeketh that the

are those of whom it is said, 'When I called, they did not answer.' And so we may hide ourselves from God. It is not His will that any should perish; and those who think themselves lost are but such lost as Jesus came to seek and to save. Are you afraid to answer His call?

'I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.'—JOHN x. 11.

Oh wondrous resting-place for a weary heart! Oh Name that is above every name, how sweet in all its modifications! I think this one verse might bear up a world's sorrow. What question of the Lord's constant care, of His tender love? He hath given His *life* for the sheep.

'But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.'

—JOHN x. 12.

There is no other help but Jesus, there is no other trust but in His name. All

its own need, that it may securely in one or in all or once let the danger come,—temptation or death draw ne hireling fleeth. Whatever th in, out of Christ, will either u it in time of need, or will utterly forsaken by it: as a rea man lean on, it shall pierc as a broken cistern, that cawater.

'The hireling fleeth, because he and careth not for the sheep.'-Joh

world is a quicksand, and its fame and its glory are but shadows, and a man's own righteousness is as filthy rags. From whatever side the danger comes,— be it sorrow, or poverty, or sickness, or fear,—at its first token the hireling fleeth. And the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep. Ah, how 'scattered and peeled' has been many a one who followed hirelings! 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.'

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.'— JOHN x. I-3.

It is a mistake for any one to suppose himself merely part of a crowd. He who bringeth out the host of stars by number,

of all His flock, to whon not say, 'I have called th thou art mine.'

"And when he putteth forth goeth before them, and the shee they know his voice."—John x. Into all dangers through

Into all dangers, through wherever the Lord leads, I low without a question; for His voice. A stranger will low, but will flee from him; it not the voice of stranger.

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nor behind us, leaving us danger as we may: but He and the first strength of the Him. 'In all their afflictic afflicted, and the angel of I saved them;' therefore the cloto Him, the more complete defence. 'A thousand shall right hand, but it shall not thee,' who art abiding under to f the Almighty. Peter four work to get through the

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or taught. For this is know Thee, the only true Christ whom Thou hast s

'My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me: and I giv life; and they shall never peris man pluck them out of my h which gave them me, is greate man is able to pluck them o hand. I and my Father are 27-30.

Note the order of progre His voice,—and then the and acknowledges them: grace by God Himself; an tion of God standeth sure. able to pluck them out of hand.' Nor does this imply from the hand that guides that gave; for 'I and my Fati

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'Now the God of peace, that I from the dead our Lord Jesus, that herd of the sheep, through the blood lasting covenant, make you perfect i work to do His will.'—HEB. xiii. 20.

'Our Lord Jesus.' In how ferent ways professe.'

the entire putting away of the cet in every good work from For if the blood of bulls and the ashes of an heifer symclean, sanctifieth to the he flesh; how much more shof Christ, who through the offered Himself without spourge your conscience from o serve the living God?



15

Such ye were,—but are now returned. If ye be in the light, walk as children of ght.' 'Thy vows are upon me, O God.'

'And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not way.'—I PET. v. 4.

'Unto them that look for Him shall He ppear;' and when He comes, His reward with Him. 'Ye shall receive a crown f glory that fadeth not away.' Only that ne Lord has been pleased to do it. I aink we should never have dared to use nis word 'reward' in such a connection. leward, for what? - for consenting to e lured back from the wilderness? for llowing ourselves to be found of the ood Shepherd? Surely whoever gets heaven will be lost in wonder, almost s much as in love and praise. Yet the romise is sealed: we have nothing to o but take it. Therefore be like unto en that wait for their Lord, that when e cometh and knocketh, they may open call us, pur

—the great Shepherd of the between us and danger, as I been; still going before His still mighty to save. 'Fear flock; for it is your Father's sure to give you the kingdom.







II.

'I shall not **W**Ant.'



NE has need to say the words over again and again, to get their force. I shall not want—

I shall not want. What strange words, in this world where losses and wants are so many! where beauty is consumed like the moth, and riches make to themselves wings, and expectation vanishes, and life is but a vapour! Not want?—The Lord is my Shepherd.

'O fear the Lord, ye His saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.'—Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10.

It would seem that our fear is much of the time misplaced. There is a fear of

e Lord God is a sun and shield: the I ve grace and glory: no good thing will ld from them that walk uprightly,'—
11.

re is a whole array of wants answer ce. O cold and pining in darkp ord is a sun: O hard pressed i He is a shield. Art thou we ed? the Lord will give gre by Master, despised and Il give glory. The repu shall be one day taken

good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. Is it hard to believe this? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'—MATT. vi. 33.

That first seeking, — how hard it is! How eagerly the thousand things of earth crowd towards the front! The hourly cares, the daily needs—each clamouring for attention. Yet seek first the king dom: there may not be time for all.

'All these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of such things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.'—LUKE xii. 30, 31.

All these do the nations of the world seek after—you are not alone in your desires: they make a broad mistake who think that religion abolishes human nature. Neither are the desires wrong.

fear Him. This is one words of Scripture,—the answer of a love that u and can do all. There these words, 'He knoweth knoweth that you have things,—it may be hearneed, or soul-longing,—desire, the unfulfilled wipang of disappointment, less reaching forth of hor to every sigh over mere this word comes: Your l

a Lord knoweth it. Not one of them forgotten by Him, and vet maybe not e is granted. Why? Be content with is own reply: Your Father knoweth. one person can enjoy the fruits of e earth, and delight himself with its rfumes, while another grows faint at the ere smell of a strawberry, and sickens he but catch the breath of a rose: just , I suppose, may one heart be safely lulged with the bloom and sweetness this present life, while to another no is safe but that which comes direct m heaven. It must not pass over rth's flowers in its way. And to all s there is no answer but the-' Even Father, for so it seemed good in Thy Beware of charging the Lord th partiality; beware of doubting the ness of His love. For see:

He that spared not His own Son, but delivered m up for us all, shall He not with Him also ly give us all things?'—Rom, viii. 32.

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He did not spare. And i need of all He did not: His own Son, shall He not freely give us all things i are yours.'

'Thanks be unto God for gift.'—2 COR. ix. 15.

For who can measure Christ, which passeth knowl

> 'Who can tell what the Of the many mansio



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say 'unspeakable.' And so having wealth which we cannot count, it well becomes us to bear patiently, ay, thankfully, the want of small change now and then. 'Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!'

'My Lord seeth me a tired man far behind,' says Rutherford. 'I have gotten much love from Christ, but I give Him little or none again. My white side cometh out on paper to men; but at home and within I find much black work, and great cause of a low sail, and of little boasting.'

'My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'—PHIL. iv. 9.

It is wonderful that we do not catch more of the tone of Bible assurance. There, certain things being first assumed, other things follow without question. Thus the apostle, supposing himself to be speaking to Christians, then maps out the broad promises to them with no

ing, 'How shall I gomighty master-key for Giant Despair, for every ing Castle. 'I have a leadled Promise!' said He had forgotten to take it out.

i :

The deed is very ful covers all your need. At for it is 'according to His.' There is first redemption, ness of sins, according to His grace'—'the exceedin grace in His kindness'

'Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'—HEB. xiii. 5.

Some of the gentle words of the Bible make us feel more thoroughly ashamed than all its denunciations. 'Be content with such things as ye have.' What things? The riches of glory, the hope of eternal life. These might cure us of pining for the different wealth of our neighbours. We who may always draw with joy from the wells of salvation. should not lie fainting for a draught from lower springs. Yet, lest even this should not hush our murmurs, the apostle adds one word more: 'He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' The presence of Christ,—this is the real supply of all our need. In His presence is fulness of joy, even in this world: for the pleasures we can wait till we get to His right hand.

'He maketh me to lie de yastures.'



E shall find rest un said the Lord] all weary ones o

and that very rest breathe perfume from every word of 'He maketh me to lie dow less ones, are none too reac peace that is offered us;

which we have been so wearily travers-

ing? Nay; but in green pastures. cool and fresh the mere words are? No matter how dry and barren the rest of earth may be, there is one spot of unfading green, even in this world: for the mercies of the Lord are new every morning.

'He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.'-DEUT, viii. 3.

He who has never been like Esau, 'at the point to die' of hunger, can hardly know the wonderful reviving power in a single one of the Lord's words. heavenly manna, 'sweet to the taste,' vet which he who eateth wists not whence it is,-coming day by day, so that while that of yesterday has lost all power for our need, that of to-day just meets it,- rore the unclouded sunsiwith the cold drops of the who can describe it? children of Israel taste said, It is manna' ('a per this day our daily bread) not what it was.' Bless man does not live by breany help that must pass the mortal hand to his.

'He humbled thee, and to hunger.' Ah, how humb failure, and the crumbling

i!



thus humbled and brought low, decked but with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, that they shall not only eat, but be satisfied. They shall praise the Lord.

'O how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!'—Ps. xxxi. 19.

'Bless the Lord, O my soul—who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.'—Ps. ciii. 5.

As the Lord's mercies are new every morning, so those to whom they come have a perpetual freshness of life, untouched by the burden and heat of the day. Their youth is renewed; they are like a tree planted by the rivers of water; they shall still bring forth fruit in old age.

'Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses.'—Ps. cvii. 5, 6.

loving-kindness of the drier, the wearier the sure and abundant are underlying springs. rivers which become a glittering sand in the sun

by digging down a foot o find water sweet and plent 'He satisfieth the longing so hungry soul with goodness.'-Ps

Rest for the soul: here the longing satisfied, the Satisfied, satisfied !-Oh L

a taste of the promises of God, that all life's sweet, and bitter too, were fairly outdone: they are remembered but for the comparison, to show how far they come short. 'Open Thou mine eves, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.'

'Eat. O friends: drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.'-CANT. v. I.

I do not know why we are so slow to take God at His word. It seems easy enough to expect blessings at the hand of earthly friends; the difficulty is to keep ourselves from expecting too much; but when the fulness of grace is actually offered to us, we content ourselves with taking a little. 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it, comes with strange rebuke to our half-closed lips and doubtful hearts.

'Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and dealt wondrously with you: an never be ashamed.'—JOEL ii. 2

Satisfaction, plenty, joy these are all in the bond if we 'hearken diligently not slothful,' says the a lowers of them who the patience inherit the pron is a good land: go ye up

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'They shall feed and lie of make them afraid.'—ZEPH.

Hunger after earthly

earnestly that which is promised to the craving. Fulness of earthly good God may grant, and yet send 'leanness into the soul;' but he that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, shall be 'filled with all the fulness of God.'

'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed.'—JOHN vi. 27.

'Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.'—JOHN vi. 35.

The Lord Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of all that we need or can obtain. The bread of life, the water of the fountain of life, support His followers in every wilderness. 'They all drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.' Weak, and nothing in themselves, they are complete in Him for time and for eternity. 'He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.'

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promises such a region of bathed in such glory, fi triumph, that it seems as mountable barrier must k and 'Jordan roll between where we shall love God hearts, and know the love be one with Him. Yet, river of death is but a st through the Lord's domini dividing line between us and then, is the barrier? 'O f of heart to but a so



THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM. 35

ife for ever there from fear of famine, niet for ever from fear of evil. Easy ill be then the crossing of that narrow ream from one part of the Lord's ountry to another, the Lord Himself olding us by the right hand.



'Be leadeth me beside waters.'



EST for the soul promise, and now peace which Jesus

who follow His leading. T He says, 'I will give you rest of that rest 'remaineth:' bu peace,' was what the Lord espet to bring. For He is our peace being justified by faith, we waters of quietness, as the word is,—flowing ever, and though through lonely places sometimes, yet untouched by the year of drought. 'Peace I leave with you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'

It seems as if there were some difference in the bestowing of these two. 'He maketh me' in the one case, but in the other 'He leadeth me,'—leadeth me beside the quiet waters, where I may drink if I will: the water must be drawn from the wells of salvation, or I shall miss its refreshment. But who need be disquieted, while the promise stands: 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink?'

'When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?'—Job xxxiv. 29.

The very murmur of the river of peace is here. I suppose there is no fear, no disturbance of spirit, which the full, assured knowledge and love of God may

tremble. But when the quietness, who then can Even sorrow itself lifts u those still streams, and th waters' wash all the bitter tears. 'My peace I give

'How excellent is Thy loving therefore the children of men p the shadow of Thy wings. The antly satisfied with the fatness Thou shalt make them drink pleasures.'—Ps. xxxvi. 7, 8.

As we love to follow a

, therefore fear none of those things nich ye shall suffer. For it is not the omise of rest or joy or safety that so lls the heart; it is not present relief om suffering; it is no taking away of esent pain. These are but the lower rings. It is the love of God—'the urce of all,' unchanging when all else sses away—that brings life and strength d full content.

'My times are in Thy hand, O God. I wish them there!'

nd as the mountain spring rises suddenly t of the ground, fed by some unseen, known supply, so this. We follow the eam back from point to point for a nile, but then are stayed.

> 'For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why.'

There is abundant present refreshment those that seek Him, and there is a er of joy on its way.

As the hart panteth after the water-brooks

for Thee in a dry and unis, 'is.'—Ps. lxiii. I.

The promise of satisfiagainst thirst and long matters than this. No have his longing after even 'sighs for "Hir loveth" have their del ford. Yet the longing answered. But oh, wi it break forth, 'in a d where no water is!' 'bands unto Thee.'—th



THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

so is the soul sometimes under 'the burden and heat of the day.' 'I am at the woint to die!' said the weary Esau: what profit shall this birthright do to me?' And so it seems, now and then, as if there were no profit nor pleasure in anything: the hands hang down in very deadness of spirit, as well as of physical energy, until He by whose knowledge 'the clouds drop down dew' comes to confirm and lift up His inheritance. my springs are in Thee.' 'See,' says Rutherford, 'that Christ's rain goeth down to the root of all your withered plants.' If not, what mortal screen keeps off the heavenly shower? what hard and unstirred soil refuses to receive it?

'He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in dry places like a river.'—Ps. cv. 41.

You see the waters come from the rock,
—not from those softer, smoother, easier
places that we should choose. But once

channels that we thought more be filled. This is '1 of peace.' I was in a we day—trying to hold up my passed by me a waft of e a strain of her music, a life; and went to the Bible this is what it said to m the Lord, ye righteous joy, all ye that are up 'The waters ran in diriver.'

the poor and ne

hear. For 'weakness can speak and cry, when we have not a tongue.'

'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. - Isa, xliv. 3. 4.

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, it is all our real life. And so in every time of trial, 'this is the rest wherewith He shall cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing'-if we will but hear. 'Fear none of those things which ye shall suffer;' for-

'They thirsted not when He led them through the deserts.'-ISA. xlviii. 21.

Only we must take care not to go through there alone.

'They shall feed in the ways, and their pasture shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy or there are springs of refres the way. But there are fe ing words in the Bible thave known and believed God hath toward us.'

'Ho, every one that thirsteth, waters, and he that hath no mobuy, and eat; yea, come, buy without money, and without price

The lame and impotent crowds to the pool of Beth here and there a few seconds.

The whole heart is sick, and the eyes of their understanding are darkened. There was no need to call the first; but for the second — 'Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!'

'The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.'
—ISA. lviii. II.

All through the Bible the promise is not of freedom from trouble, but of blessing and peace in the midst of it. This is not the better land,—'a land of fountains and depths,' where 'the sun shall not light on us, nor any heat;' yet if the Lord do but guide us continually, each soul shall be satisfied in drought—shall be like a watered garden. For still 'all my springs are in Thee.'

'Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth This perpetual freshness most lovely, attractive thing: He that spreadeth out root of peace, does not even se cometh! When all others a by reason of the drought, he careful; he alone does not yielding fruit.

,, u.

'O Lord, the hope of Israel, a Thee shall be ashamed, and they the me shall be written in the earth have forsaken the

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cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?'—JER. xviii. 14.

Never, were we not constantly dazzled with the mirage of this world. So one sorrow, and one piece of discipline after another, say to us, 'Arise ye and depart; for this is not your rest:' and by and by we learn that all the cold flowing waters come from another place. Still 'all my springs are in Thee.'

'So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.'—Amos iv. 8.

Ah, what weary painstaking and fatigue, this seeking relief at earth's broken cisterns,—how fruitless, how pitiful! Cities wandering to another city after refreshment, and hearts making the round of this world's pleasures, but not satisfied! 'Yet have they not returned unto me, saith the Lord.'

^{&#}x27;Iesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever

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th of this water shall thirst again: but whodrinketh of the water that I shall give him ever thirst; but the water that I shall give hall be in him a well of water springing up replasting life. —JOHN iv. 13, 14.

there religion is fullest and strongthere religion is fullest and strong-They who slake their thirst at earth's es are for ever restless and craving, hose who come to Christ for rest the spring of eternal peace to draw Not a surface stream, whose waters

Not a surface stream, whose waters be cut off by an enemy or vanish in 'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'—REV. vii. 16, 17.

How do all 'the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them' seem by the side of that? and of what comparison is 'all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,' with one single drop from those living fountains of eternal joy? Do you say you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep? Listen again:

'And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.'—REV. xxi. 6.

It is done: the fountain is opened; and He who is the beginning of all our hope stands ready to bring it to its full fruition. It is done.

Was the Saviour's d

'And He showed me a pur life, clear as crystal, proceeding of God and of the Lamb.'—RE

Clear as crystal is that n no soil of sin and no sha And do you see, it proc throne! Not from God's but from His absolute so unchangeable glory, His sa For it is the throne of G Lamb.

'And the Spirit and the bride





V.

'Be restoreth my Soul.'

VEN as a physician heals the sick; as a king takes back into favour a penitent subject; as who is skilled and strong, allays dis-

r, setting everything in its proper e and to its proper work,—so 'He reth my soul.'

fter they had rest, they did evil again before : therefore leftest Thou them in the hand of enemies, so that they had dominion over : yet when they returned, and cried unto , Thou heardest them from heaven; and many didst Thou deliver them, according to Thy ies.'—Neh. ix. 28.

is the old sad story; as true of many ul personally, as it was of the Jewish on: 'After they had rest, they did evil n.' Then follows the time of sore trial ful denverance in and ...

'But many times?' Oh how should be true many times of any Christian

'Oh that I were as in months past, as days when God preserved me; when His shined upon my head, and when by His walked through darkness!'—JOB xxix. 2,:

You see every loss can be borne, the loss of the presence of God. tian, struggling in the Slough of De never thought of trying to get out s the side next the Celestial City; Job's longing remembrance, in the stall his troubles, went first to the

'The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends; also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.'—JoB xlii. 10.

When Job prayed for his friends, the Lord turned (or repealed) his captivity. And I suppose it is generally by some simple means that Doubting Castle is left behind,—the sudden use of that key called Promise, or the mere effort to guide another soul out of the dark labyrinths of Giant Despair. For even in sorrow it is quite possible to think too much about one's self. As soon as Job looked off at the wants of others, he saw his own exceeding richness as a child of God; and presently Job had twice as much as he had before.

'Bury thy sorrow,—
The world has its share,—
Bury it deeply,
Hide it with care.
Think of it calmly
When curtained by night;
Go and tell Jesus,
And all will be right.'

cry be in audible words stretching forth of the 1 unto God. So the leper his hand, 'and it was reste as the other.'

'Thou hast turned for me n dancing; Thou hast put off m girded me with gladness, to ti glory may sing praise to Thee, a O Lord my God, I will give thar ever.'—Ps. xxx. 11, 12.

It is all of the Lord, -

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in the sunlight, mounting even up towards heaven.

'I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes: nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto Thee.'—Ps. xxxix. 22.

See what it is to speak in haste. And see what a wonderful 'nevertheless.' Even those dark regions to which sin and fear sometimes banish the soul, are not so far off but that God can hear.

'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.'—Ps. xxxii. 5.

Not only my sin, but the iniquity of it.

'I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.'—Ps. xl. 1-3.

The Lord has heard: being sure of

and stand upon the rock! well be a new song for such Men shall see it, and fea 'The fear of the Lord and t the Holy Ghost' are much allied than some people thi sides, those who look on meets a soul with His res may indeed feel awe. It is

'I said, Lord, be merciful unt soul; for I have sinned against Th

Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee.'

'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.'—Ps. xlii. 5.

I shall yet praise Him:

'To patient faith the end is sure.'

'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit.'—Ps. li. 10-12.

The word which signifies to make out of nothing, may well be used in praying for a new heart. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.' All who have been truly converted know this, and for them the word will never lose its significance: in every longing for holiness, in every new return to God, they are ready to cry, 'Create in me a

we are brought very low. Help our salvation, for the glory of Th deliver us, and purge away our name's sake.'—Ps. lxxix. 8, 9.

For Thy name's sake! I plea, and used here in bot that which belonged more e the old dispensation, and th wholly of the new. Help, fo of Thy name, and purge aw for Thy name's sake. And t

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It is a great thing to know and believe the love that God hath toward us,—to Pray, not 'change Thou,' but 'turn us.'

'Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?'—Ps. lxxxv. 6.

So here, David asks with the full loving belief that God has pleasure in His people's joy.

'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all Itis benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy ife from destruction; who crowneth thee with oving-kindness and tender mercies.'—Ps. ciii.

This is Bible restoration. Forgiven, cured, brought back to life; wearing the nalo of the sunshine of God's tender nercies like a crown.

'I love the Lord, because He hath heard my roice and my supplications. Because He hath aclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. The sorrows of eath compassed me, and the pains of hell gate

Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul.' cxvi. I-4.

You see the one infallible way or darkness, whether it be of sin, of row, or of doubt: call upon Him. 'shall the word assuredly be, soone later, I love the Lord, because He heard my voice and my supplication.

'I was brought low, and He helped me. turn unto thy rest, O my sonl; for the hath dealt bountifully with thee. For hast delivered my soul from death, mine from tears, and my feet from falling.'—Ps.

HE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM. 6

service with a free heart, the rest ect repose in Him.

ore I was afflicted, I went astray: but now cept Thy word.'—Ps. cxix. 67.

er forget the message of restorait is, Go, and sin no more. *Now* [kept Thy word;—kept it with a rembling heart, it may be, yet kept . For remember the pledge:

end unto my cry; for I am brought very eliver me from my persecutors; for they nger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, nay praise Thy name.'—Ps. cxlii. 6, 7. ne, and let us return unto the Lord; for h torn, and He will heal us; He hath, and He will bind us up. After two days revive us: in the third day He will raise and we shall live in His sight.'—HOSEA

ne, and let us return,—no matter what distance. 'Ye shall find me,' he Lord, 'when ye shall search for th all your heart.' Return from all pray and not faint. For see, the

ing.' Therefore wait on the be of good courage. For

'I will heal their backsliding, I freely.'—HOSEA xiv. 4.

Oh what a word is 'free who have 'nothing to pay!'

'Of sinners sure I am the c But grace is rich and fre This lovely truth affords r To sinners, even to me!

Well may the word be, 'help on one that is mighty!'





VI.

'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness.'



O that if we are in any other paths, we may feel quite sure that we have some other leader.

There is no following the Lord but in His own way.

'The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is he lot of His inheritance. He found him in a esert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; Ie led him about, He instructed him, He kept im as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth p her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth broad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on er wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and nere was no strange god with him.'—DEUT. xxii. 9-12.

What can one say but 'O Israel, trust hou in the Lord! He is their help and

leir shield?, For who that is loes not know the desert and the was howling wilderness? Who has not prov the loving kindness of the Lord? W cannot say from the very depths of

heart:

If the Lord our Leader be, We may follow without fear'? Thou puttest my feet also in the sto lookest narrowly unto all my paths; The nookest narrowly unto an my pacus; Job a print upon the heels of my feet. Job This is so wonderful, so hard

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cause of mine enemies: make Thy way straight before my face.'—Ps. v. 8.

Lead me, lead me,—because of mine enemies, notwithstanding my friends, in spite of myself.

'Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.'—Ps. xvii. 5.

Not in standing still, but in advancing, can we hope to be upheld. Hold up my goings. But there is no prayer for sloth and idleness, still less for any holding up out of God's paths. Therefore

'Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day.'—Ps. xxv. 4, 5.

How grand the knowledge, how sure the learning, how sweet and clear the guidance, of those who wait on the Lord, not for a short hour in the morning, or a still shorter hour at night, but 'all the day long!'

'Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net.'—Ps. xxv. 15.

foaming torrent,—fix your eyes u and on the other side!

'I will instruct thee, and teach thee which thou shalt go: I will guide thee eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as which have no understanding; whose I be held in with bit and bridle, lest they unto thee.'—Ps. xxxii. 8, 9.

Any one who has watched the which a gentle, obedient child its mother at every question or watching for a sign,—the look of r of appeal,—will readily understa

pense with obedience, would do well to study this verse. If the love be true, so is also the obedience; and it is in unswerving fidelity to law that the righteous is upheld. Therefore:

'O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacle.'—Ps. xliii. 3.

Darkness, not light, is the desire of one part of the world; but of the other, light and not darkness. More light, more truth. Not new truth, as some would have it, but a fuller shining of that which has been already revealed. For although it be true that 'the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth,' yet the general sunshine is not enough for our need: there must be special sunbeams sent down into the shadowy ravine wherein we dwell.

'This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.'—Ps. xlviii. 14.

This God, — He who is 'great and greatly to be praised;' He who is 'known

unto the end. And mere in following such a guide,' ford, 'even though He sho through hell,—if so be I co foremost.'

'Thou hast delivered my soul fr not Thou deliver my feet from falling before God in the light of the living

Eternal life is the first then the daily life of praise a ness in this world. To wa before God, for so the word ham prayed: 'O that Ishma

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

'I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only.'—Ps. lxxi. 16.

Not of mine and Thine, but of Thine only. So go I in Thy strength, 'having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' Then shall angels bear me up, lest I dash my foot against a stone.

'He made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. And He led them on safely, so that they feared not. But the sea overwhelmed their enemies.'—Ps. lxxviii. 52, 53.

Not only safely, but so that *they feared* not,—in a strange land, in the wilderness, through the flood on foot.

'Teach me Thy way, O Lord; and I will walk in Thy truth: unite my heart to fear Thy name.'
—Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

Any one who has ever felt the misery of a divided heart, can well understand this prayer. The united heart, the single

statutes! Then shall I not De ass: have respect unto all Thy commacxix, 5, 6.

And here again:

- 'With my whole heart have I so let me not wander from Thy com Ps. cxix. 10.
- 'Order my steps in Thy wor any iniquity have dominion over 133.

And it is needful to trust pray,—to believe that streng to reach out the hand of fa So far the trust; and thus the promise:

'He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber.'—Ps. cxxi. 3.

Then the answering assurance, full, stedfast, joyful:

'Cause me to hear Thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in Thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee.'—Ps. cxliii. 8.

'Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.'—Ps. cxliii. 10.

And one thing more, without which all else is nought:

'They forsook all, and followed Him.'—LUKE v. II.

' for Pis Name's

'For Thy name's sake, O Lor iniquity; for it is great.'—Ps. xxv



HE first step in a righteousness is t sins pardoned: the

towards it is to acknowled, we are away. So far, the of our own can ever bring it is all for Thy name's subject to the state of the sta

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

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conversion of some; in the earnest work and blameless lives of others. He will help them, He will change them, for His name's sake.

'I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen.'—EZEK. xx. 9.

'I will sanctify my great name.'— EZEK. XXXVI. 23.

'Thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for Thy name's sake lead me and guide me.'—Ps. xxxi. 3.

But, to thoroughly understand this (if one may use that word concerning anything in the Bible), it is needful to study well those other wonderful passages concerning the Lord's pleasure in His people.

'The Lord delighteth in thee.'-Isa. lxii. 4.

'He will save, He will rejoice over thee with jov.'—ZEPH. iii. 17.

'It shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it,'—Jer. xxxiii. 9.

Therefore with reason, thou dust, does the prophet Jere his marvellous petition:

- 'O Lord, though our iniquities tes do Thou it for Thy name's sake.'—
- 'We are called by Thy name; l JER. xiv. 9.
- 'Do not abhor us for Thy name disgrace the throne of Thy glor break not Thy covenant with us.'—
- 'These things have I spoken us the Lord Jesus to His disciples, might remain in you, and that you full.'—JOHN xv. 11.

chooses to bring honour to His name?

Ah, listen!

'Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'—EPH. v. 25, 27.

Such are those in whom the Lord's joy 'remains,'—such are they, who 'shew forth His praise.' But of others it is said:

'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.'—ROM. ii. 24.

Therefore

'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'—2 TIM. ii. 19.

And what follows then with those of whom this is true? First, 'to those who believe, He is precious,'—or preciousness: His name 'is above every name.' Then, some 'hazard their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;' some 'are reproached for the name of Christ;'

for the Son of man's sake.'

'Whatsoever ye do, in word the name of the Lord Jesus, givi and the Father by Him.'—Col.

'Him that overcometh, will I the temple of my God, and he s out: and I will write upon him God, and the name of the city of is New Jerusalem, which come heaven from my God: and I will my new name.'—REV. iii. 12.

'They shall see His face; and be in their foreheads.'—REV. xxii.



VIII.

'Nen, though I walk through the Valley of the Shudow of Penth, I will fear no Ebil.'

HREE times—in three ways the Christian may pass through that valley: finding it dark and

oul with the assaults of sin, or black with he overwhelming presence of sorrow, or lim and terrible with the long shadow of leath itself. Yet need he not fear.

'Wherefore criest thou unto me?'—said the Lord unto Moses, when all Egypt was in hot puruit of the escaped ones—'speak unto the chillren of Israel, that they go forward.'—Ex. xiv. 15.

'The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied ipon them; I will draw my sword, my hand hall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in he mighty waters.'—Ex. xv. 9, 10.

'Ye are or Gou, muc canada,, come them: because greater is He t than he that is in the world.'—I Joi

Remember this, when these are true:

'Mine iniquities have taken hold that I am not able to look up.'—Ps

'Ye know that He was manifeste sin.'—I JOHN iii. 5.

'He was in all points tempted lil HEB. iv. 15.

'And they overcame by the blood—REV. xii. 11.

There are other times,

lrought, and of the shadow of death, a land hat no man passed through, and where no man lwelt.'—Jer. ii. 6.

What then? Then

'Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning.'—Amos v. 8.

'Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in

knowledge?'—Joв xxxvii. 16.

'What I do'—said the Lord Jesus to His wondering disciple—'thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.'—JOHN xiii. 7.

Therefore be content to know only that God knows; trusting all to Him, 'till the day break, and the shadows flee away.' 'Shall not the Judge of the whole earth do right?'

'I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.'—Isa. xlv. 7.

'It is I: be not afraid.'-MATT. xiv. 27.

Can you say, then, with the old servant

but and 12. a me, is cu but none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My h and my heart faileth: but God is the strength my heart, and my portion for ever.'—Ps. lxxiii. 26.

Then comes, when all these calamities e overpast, the entrance into that final adow before the break of day;—when e evening light has left the valley, and e dawn has not yet come down.

'I go whence I shall not return,'—said Job,—ven to the land of darkness and the shadow of ath.'—JOB x. 21.

With all its unknown solemnity and andeur. For

'Have the gates of death been opened unto se? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow death?'—Job xxxviii. 17.

Those gates before which king Hezeah 'wept sore,' and the face of Stenen became 'as the face of an angel,' and Paul stood 'ready.' How will your ce look, and mine, in that shadow? is indeed 'a pale horse' upon which - 2

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THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM. 83

'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.'—Ps. xxiii. 4.

And why?

- 'For Thou art with me.'-Ps. xxiii. 4.
- 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.'—Ex. xxxiii. 14.
- 'And the angel of His presence saved them.'—ISA. lxiii. 9.
 - 'His presence is salvation.'-Ps. xlii. 5.
 - 'He is a very present help.'-Ps. xlvi. 1.
- 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'—Isa. xliii. 2.

For 'Jesus knoweth all the fords.' You see the leading fails not here. 'He leadeth me;' and though—and when—I walk through that valley, and His paths of righteousness lie there, I will fear no evil. For why?

¹ Rutherford.

'for Thon art with

ITH me in trouble to deliver me,' – alway, even unto

the world.'

'With us is the Lord our God, fight our battles.'—2 CHRON. xxxii

And 'I am continually with the Psalmist. The bond is t

'All mine, all Thine

of Tersteegen. 'With us.'-

Moses in the wilderness, with Joshua in he Promised Land. In all Paul's persecutions, 'the Lord stood with him.' He howed Himself to the dying Stephen, intil the sight of the glory dulled the eeling of the stones. He shut the nouths of the lions for Daniel; He was 'a fourth one' in the fiery furnace of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. His very name is 'Immanuel, God with is.'

'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not lismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen hee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold hee with the right hand of my righteousness.'—SA. xli. 10.

'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?'
-Rom. viii. 35.

'When thou goest out to battle against thine nemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a cople more than thou, be not afraid of them; or the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought hee up out of the land of Egypt.'—DEUT. xx. I.

'He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.'—

ALT. 43.

'Abide in me, and I in you.''The sheep follow Him, fo voice.'—JOHN x. 4.

And yet

'The voice of the Lord break 'The voice of the Lord shaket

---Ps. xxix. 5, 8.

Adam, sinning and unfit and hid himself; but Sar 'Speak; for Thy servant he

'I sleep, but my heart waketl of my beloved that knocketh.'—
'Who is this that cometh up

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

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'Nevertheless,' said David, in the midst of doubts, losses, and temptations,—'Nevertheless, I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand.'—Ps. lxxiii. 23.

'I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.'—
ISA. xli. 13.

'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee.'—DEUT. xxxiii. 27.

'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me.'—Ps. xxiii. 4.

And the gates of death roll back; and there can only be seen those other gates, of which 'every several gate was of one pearl.'

'Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.'—ISA. xxvi. 2.

'Well done, good and faithful servant! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'—MATT. xxv. 21.

'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'—I COR. xv. 55-57.

'Thy Bod and Thy Staff, comfort me.'



HESE two words soun alike in our English —or at least one c

classes them together; but the wide difference. The staff was a bol of leading, of guidance, of but the rod was the old token of control. 'The rod of mine 'Stretch out thy rod,' said the to Moses. The true child of the wide with the staff of the staff

'Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.'—ISA. l. 10.

'Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee.'—2 CHRON. xiv. 11.

And it is not future, possible help.

'The Lord is nigh upto all them that call upon Him.'—Ps. cxlv. 18.

'And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.'—ISA. lxv. 24.

'Sir,' said the poor nobleman, 'come down ere my child die. Jesus said unto him,'—already even now,—'Thy son liveth.'—JOHN iv. 49, 50.

Study this, you who think your case is past remedy,—you who think yourselves forgotten.

'Dost thou ask, when comes His hour?
Then, when it shall aid thee best;
Trust His faithfulness and power,
Trust in Him, and quiet rest.
Suffer on, and hope, and wait:
Jesus never comes too late.'

... ... und ent stan gu tugi

'I have laid help on one that lxxxix. 19.

'Now there was leaning on J of His disciples.'—JOHN xiii. 23.

So leaning, not one of harbour for a moment the le of the heathen king, too ofting in our hearts:

'O Daniel, is thy God, whom tinually, able to deliver thee fro DAN. vi. 20.

Happy Daniel! the dan

- 'I know,' said Job, 'that Thou canst do everything.'-JoB xlii. 2.
- 'I know whom I have believed,' said the apostle in later times. 'He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.'-2 TIM. i. 12.

 - 'Able to keep you from falling.'—JUDE 24.
 'Able to make all grace abound.'—2 COR. ix. 8.
 - 'Able to save to the uttermost.'-HEB. vii. 25.
 - 'He giveth power to the faint.'-Isa. xl. 29.
- 'His strength is made perfect in weakness.'-2 COR. xii. 9.

For

- 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.'-MATT. xxviii. 18.
- 'I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.'-REV. i. 18.
 - 'Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.'



XI.

reparest a Cable before me in resence of mine Enemies.'

NE of the promises of rest and peace, in the midst of disturbance. For this is not a snatch ort, caught in haste and tasted by but a full and quiet refreshment,



....

'I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine,' said the Lord Jesus to His disciples, 'until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'—MATT. xxvi. 29.

Here, in this world, with the fight not yet over and the armour not laid down, God does not always spread for us a feast, in the full sense of the term. Not yet will He 'restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the canker worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm:' not yet will He give you to drink of 'wines upon the lees.' Just now, Ephraim and all that belongs to him are 'emptied from vessel to vessel.' But there is always the full, sweet, making good the promise:

'Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their souls from death, and to keep them alive in famine.'—Ps. xxxiii. 18, 19.

It is 'daily bread,'—'food convenient' for us. A dinner of herbs with love; a handful, with quietness of spirit.

while others snatch on the and are hungry,' and 'eat on the and are not satisfied;' while stead, and hungry,' must ofte of those who are fullest of goods,—Israel, faint, yet purs to many a wood where 'the hearthere are no days of famine for

^{&#}x27;If ye be willing and obedient, ye good of the land.'—ISA. i. 19.

^{&#}x27;The meek shall eat, and be s

^{&#}x27;I am the Lord thy God which out of the land of Egypt: open thy

'Not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live.'—DEUT. viii. 3.

'Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!'

'He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.'—Ps. lxxxi. 13, 16.

'I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.'—Job xxiii. 12.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.'— MATT. v. 6.

An easy passport, one would say, to that table prepared 'in the presence of our enemies.' But how strange a one! Are any of us really unwilling to have pride and unbelief and self-will—with their myrmidons of temper and fear and shame—all kept at a distance, or led in chains? Are we unready to eat only 'that which is good?' 'It is a great thing,' says Samuel Rutherford, 'to consent to want corruption.' Ah, do we not often make times of scarcity for ourselves?

This is the bread that came do that a man may eat thereof, and : vi. 50.

'The remnant of Israel shall: nor speak lies; neither shall a dec found in their mouth: for they sh down, and none shall make them iii. 13.

Do you want to know mor what is their fare? Oh, the 'royal dainties.' The wo than honey and the honey bread of life; the water, of whinkesh at "

'Thou feedest them with the bread of tears.'—Ps. lxxx. 5.

'The bread of adversity, and the water of affiction.'—ISA. xxx. 20.

'My tears have been my meat, day and night,' said David.—Ps. xlii. 3.

Well,—in a little while 'thou shalt weep no more.' And now, from hour to hour, and day to day,—

'O taste and see that the Lord is good.'—Ps. xxiv. 8.

'The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'—JOHN xviii. 11.

For, remember it is all prepared. And all enemies stand off; all that can really hurt or destroy is kept away; and in their stead there is the presence of Christ, who 'filleth the hungry soul with His goodness.' Even then, in those darkest days of famine,

'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips.'—Ps. lxiii. 5.

- 'Behold, I stand at the door, a any man hear my voice, and open th come in to him, and will sup with with me.'—REV. iii. 20.
- 'My flesh is meat indeed, and drink indeed. He that eateth n drinketh my blood, dwelleth in : him.'—JOHN vi. 55, 56.





XII.

'Thou anointest my head with oil.'



wonder if we any of us take in half the sweetness and the glory of this one little clause

in our daily life-record? For as in Eastern lands this anointing was the chief sign of welcome given to a guest; so is it now to us the token of the Lord's free grace. We are welcome, not only to this table prepared, here in the desert, on the journey, but also to that supper which is made ready in the kingdom,—itself 'prepared' for us from the foundation of the world. 'The riches of the inheritance are ours:' with Christ, God has freely given us all things. 'Ask what ye will,'—there is no narrower limit.

For,—

'Not as the offence, so is Rom. v. 15.

'And when they had nothi forgave them both.'-LUKE

Did you ever study t received gifts for men?'

'I give unto them eternal li

'My peace I give unto you. 'I will give them an heart t

xxiv. 7.

'I will give them an everla lvi. 5.

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM. 101

'And white robes were given unto every one of them.'—REV. vi. 11.

'I will give thee a crown of life.'-REV. ii. 10.

And how all this? Ah,-

'Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us.'-EPH. v. 2.

There is the purchase-money. 'What hast thou'—what wilt thou ever have—that thou didst not receive?' Once more,

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

—2 COR. ix. 15.

Comprising all others,—even that without which the rest were vain. For,

'We have received,' said the apostle, 'the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God.'—I COR. ii. 12.

'If I depart,' said the Lord Jesus, 'I will send Him unto you.'—JOHN xvi. 7.

This is the breadth of the Lord's welcome; this is what His anointing means. But do you know there must be a welcome on our part too?—a hearty receiv-

.... anythi

—the utmost David cc 'render unto the Lor 'take' what the Lord o if God can find anything gifts to us, which can I glory, so let Him have it

'I give Thee what was T

But especially welcom which fills our nothingnes 'complete in Him.' I needs,—'bring empty ves that He may 611.' 'Unto him that hath, shall more be given.'—MARK iv. 24.

At His feet she poured out all that she had, weeping; and Jesus anointed her head with His peace.

'Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.'—
Isa. lxi. 3.

For once received, the Lord's welcome becomes straightway a sign of joy, of triumph, of honour.

- 'Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart.'— PROV. xxvii. 9.
- 'My horn shalt Thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.'—Ps. xcii. 10.

A sign never to be forgotten nor laid aside. In the days of the old dispensation, indeed, when 'the dimness' of twilight was upon even the chosen people, then at certain times ointment was not used: in times of mourning or of fasting.

'Feign thyself to be a mourner,' said Joab to

Cyrus.-Dan. x. 3.

But now the word is :---

'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, God.'—Isa, xl. 1.

'Rejoice in the Lord alway.'-PHIL.

For,-

'The Lord is the saving strengtl anointed.'—Ps. xxviii. 8.

'There is therefore now no conden them which are in Christ Jesus; who after the flesh, but after the Spirit,'—Ro

If you will notice that last cla

It is our consecration,—the grace of the Holy Spirit. No more of earthly engrossment, no more of worldly conformity:

'The consecration of his God is upon his head.'
-NUM. vi. 7.

'Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.'—2 Cor. . 21.

'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and 'e know all things.'—I JOHN ii. 20.

'The anointing which ye have received of Him bideth in you, and ye need not that any man each you: but as the same anointing teacheth ou of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and wen as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.'

-1 JOHN ii. 27.

In this sense, perhaps, it is said,—

'Let thy garments be always white; and let y head lack no ointment.'—ECCLES. ix. 8.

'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the ord, so walk ye in Him.'—Col. ii. 6.

Þ.

And O the nameless sweetness, O the atchless grace, of such a life !—the fra-

been with Jesus.'-ACTS iv. 13.

Poured upon the head, m to shine, the oil of joy and tion passes even to the very garment,—to the lowest things of every-day life. I called on, like the priests, vice; waiting to be crowne there is for such souls nothin nothing trivial, in all their w ness to the I ord?



'The anointing oil of the Lord is upon you.'—LEV. x. 7.

'Every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord.'—LEV. xxvii. 28.

'I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine.'—Isa. xliii. I.



XIII.

'My cap rannet



MOST rare sayi peculiar and u know not if th

whole Bible one more the use. For who among u speak thus of his lot in lifting to allow that his cur full;—much less to cou

have worn lighter crowns than he. Nay, David, like Moses, 'endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.'

'His anchor drops down through the sands of time, And on eternal things takes hold.'

He had but learned the value of 'the reproach of Christ:' with another he could say:

'I must have all things, and abound, While God is God to me.'

There is no date to this psalm: it is one of those unmarked, unlocated bits of life experience, like some of our best hymns. I could even imagine that it was written in a time of great scarcity,—when the world, and life, had of a sudden become empty, that God might fill them all. For listen:—

^{&#}x27;The Lord is my shepherd-

^{&#}x27;He leadeth me—

^{&#}x27;He restoreth me-

And with that, David's cheart too, overflowed.

'Now unto Him that is able t abundantly above all that we ask c ing to the power that worketh it be glory in the church by Christ J all ages, world without end. An 20.

'In the world ye shall have trib of good cheer; I have overcome JOHN xvi. 33.

And herein lies the secret

'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.'-Ps. xvi. 5.

Therefore (and finally) my brethren,—

- 'Rejoice in the Lord.'-PHIL. iii. I.
- 'Reioice evermore.'- 1 THESS, v. 16.
- 'In everything give thanks.'-1 THESS. v. 18.
- 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice.'-PHIL. iv. 4.

It follows, notably enough, upon this, 'Let your moderation be known unto all men.' As if hands which the Lord has filled should beware how they grasp for other treasures. I wonder what the world would think of Christians, were they always 'content with such things as they have;'-letting the joy of the Lord fill every vacant space, so that 'he who gathered little' of this world's good had yet 'no lack.' For what cannot this iov do?

'I have learned,' said Paul, 'in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere

And what was the instruction.

'The joy of the Lord is your streng viii. 10.

'Whom having not seen, ye love; though now ye see Him not, yet belie joice with joy unspeakable and full of Pet. i. 8.

Then in the brightness of light of the world, how does en light shine forth!

'Thou shalt rejoice in every good the Lord thy God hath given unto the xvi. 15. thanks, comes in the deep-toned refrain,
—and that never varies:

'My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, because I rejoice in Thy salvation.'—I SAM. ii. I.

'Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.'—I CHRON. xvi. 10.

'Let all that put their trust in Thee rejoice.'—Ps. v. 11.

'In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day.'—Ps. lxxxix. 16.

'Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him.'—Ps. cxlix. 2.

'We will rejoice in Thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.'—Ps. xx. 5.

But who marches now-a-days with those colours flying?—are they not rather folded away, lest the wind should make a rent or the sun fade them; lest they should serve but as a mark for alien bullets? Israel is too often an army without music, and her leaders without plumes.

^{&#}x27;Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice

- 'Because Thou hast been my in the shadow of Thy wings will I lxiii. 7.
- 'My lips shall greatly rejoice who Thee; and my soul, which Thou ha —Ps. lxxi. 23.
- 'Rejoice, because your names : heaven.'—LUKE x. 20.

All else is glory then. And shall cast out your name as Son of Man's sake,—

'Rejoice ye in that day, and l LUKE vi. 23.

(117 - alam in tribulations also, '-

And remember,-

'Of all the lights you can carry in your face, joy will reach the farthest out to sea.'

¹ Henry Ward Beecher.



'Surely goodness and mercy : me all the days of my



URELY: another me old-fashioned word would be well to

say, 'perhaps,' 'I hope so,' but David's faith goes furthe 'surely.'

As one who felt firm grounds feet, so he speaks. Ar

'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.'—Rom. viii. 28.

And so,-

'He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.'—PROV. x. 9.

Then 'why not have the comfort of your faith, and let Christ have the glory of it?' 'You sing,—

"When I can read my title clear," '---

said Dr. -: 'Why don't you read it clear?'

'Little faith! why didst thou waver?'1—MATT. xiv. 31.

The covenant made with thee is 'ordered in all things, and sure.' For think,—

'How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings.'—Ps. xxxvi. 7.

David had drunk deep of the still

Young's Translation.

d my God, I will give th id no doubt that t rd, down to the ver back over the days e years of darkness tion, he could read n the sovereign love Jacob, 'The God e long unto this

ith a thankful hea ast turned for ..

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shadow of death: yet all bright with the presence of his great Leader,—

'Who hath delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.'—2 COR. i. 10.

'The great and terrible land
Of wilderness and drought
Lay in the shadows behind us;
For the Lord had brought us out.

The great and terrible river,
Though shrouded still from view,
Lay in the shadows before us;
But the Lord would bear us through.'

'Godliness hath promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come.'—I TIM. iv. 8.

You see David's trust had laid hold of that which cannot be shaken. He did not comfort himself with the thought of riches or pleasure or worldly fame; neither long life nor health were on his list: it was only a blank, which the goodness and life, my lips shall praise a nec. -

From all restless cares, from a fears, even from all clamorous David had 'ceased: saying, The the Lord be done.' Could anyt better than that? Could he lacl followed by the goodness of th which 'endureth continually,' a mercy of the Lord, which 'is lasting?'

'The Lord is my light and my salvatic shall I fear? the Lord is the strength o

loves the hand of God, fears anything which it may send? 'Goodness,' and 'mercy,'—there are no darker names. For all the days of his life, David knew these were sure. And then?



'And I shall dwell in the the Ford for eber.'



HEN,-

'Pass away, earthly joy:
Jesus is mine!
Break, every mortal tie
Jesus is mine!
Dark is the wilderness,
Distant the resting-place
Jesus alone can bless;

Tesus is mine!'

You perceive David's 'surely' covered both worlds: he was as secure of the next as of this. He had 'gotten the sunny side of the brae,' where the light of the eternal city shone full and strong; he was 'that nigh heaven,' that her bulwarks and her palaces broke the force of the storm.

'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.'— 2 Cor. iv. 18.

And what was then that 'house of the Lord,' where David desired to dwell? First of all, I suppose, it was the presence of the Lord. For as the temple was in old times the chosen place of the manifestation of God, so the building, and the name of the building, became a symbol of the Divine presence. Thus of the

Almighty and the Lamb are the comp. And the city had no need of the sun, n the moon, to shine in it.'—REV. xxi. 22,

The presence of God,—it was David longed for; it is the 'ful joy' to every true believer. Here, art with me;' there, I shall be wit

'I will come again, and receive you unt that where I am, there ye may be also xiv. 3.

'So shall we ever be with the Lord.'—
iv. 17.

'Him that overcometh will I make a the temple of my God, and he shall go all this is in that house of 'many mar sions.' It is 'glory, honour, immortality it is joy everlasting; it is endless life Knowledge, 'even as we are known; sight, 'eye to eye;' vision, not 'darkly but 'face to face;' 'rest from the labours,' 'peace for evermore,' 'quietnes and assurance for ever.' There dwell-

'The general assembly and church of the firs born.'-HEB, xii. 23.

'A glorious church; not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.'-EPH. v. 25.

'The spirits of just men made perfect.'-HEI xii. 24.

The lame man leaping as an hart, th ears of the deaf unstopped, the blin eves open to the glory of the light, th dumb tongue learning its new song.

> 'There glory yet unheard of Shall shed abroad its ray, Resolving all enigmas,-An endless Sabbath-day.

Yes, peace! for war is needless; Yes, calm! for storm is past,— And goal from finished labour, And anchorage at last.

O one, O only mansion!
O Paradise of joy!
Where tears are ever banished,
And smiles have no alloy!

O house of fadeless splendour, O flowers that bear no thorn! Where they shall dwell as child Who now as exiles mourn.

Thine ageless walls are bonded

'Thou hast no shore, fair ocean! Thou hast no time, bright day!'

'In hope,' said the apostle, 'of eternal life.'-

'I beheld, and, lo! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.'—Rev. vii. 9.'

'And they sung a new song, saying, Thou ar worthy to take the book, and to open the seal thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeeme us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.'—Rev. v. 9.

'And God shall wipe away all tears from thei eyes; and there shall be no more death, neithe sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any mor pain: for the former things are passed away.'—REV. xxi. 3, 4.

'I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with The likeness.'—Ps. xvii. 15.



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